whereabouts
vol 2 — spring 2025
demo
the hart house music magazine

Thank you for picking up a copy of demo's second issue of the 24-25 season, Whereabouts Vol. 2.Our goal for this year was to further demo's mission of reducing the barrier between UofT students and their local music scene, and make our presence on campus go beyond our website and end-of-year magazine. We increased our print output by 100% with our winter zine, and our events output by 200% with our winter launch event and our collaboration with the Gargoyle for their Noise issue. In addition to this we made lots of new connections to get more writers into shows, and hosted CIUT's ATC Radio local show schedule in the back of our zine. Demo of years past has been a haven for student music journalism, and as local alternative media changes seemingly by the day, especially in this city, we are trying to carve a new path forward for demo that is focused on creating the impetus for exploration. Music is often lost in the folds, its history scattered and imperfectly localizable; a dominant theme throughout this issue. We hope this issue helps give you pause when you encounter something musical, be it new or familiar, to ask something of its whereabouts.

Jonah Page, Finch Straub, Jane Wen, and Hayden Zahary
The Co-Editors of Demo

TABLE OF CONTENTS

My Spring Awakening 3
ELEANOR WIENS FARRELLY

Dreaming of Home: Jay Chou's *Fantasy* 4
JANE WEN

The Canterbury Scene: An Introduction 5
HAYDEN ZAHARY

City Soundtrack: Songs and Stories from Across Toronto 7
FINCH STRUB

The Sound of Gen Z Punk 9
SERENA HAO

The Hip Showed Me Canada 10
ZACHARIA HUSAIN

A Glimpse into the Mongolian Metal Scene 11
SHAYLA LITTLE MACLEAN

The Rise and Fall of a Deep South Princess: A Beginner's Guide to Ethel Cain 13
TYSON TELFER

Where is Our Music 15
ELLA MACCORMACK

Folk Metal: Somewhere in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Ireland 16
AMELIE KOLNIK

MY SPRING AWAKENING

I listened to the soundtrack of the Broadway musical Spring Awakening every morning for months during my long TTC commute to Catholic school in grade 9. To this day, the music conjures up the smell and feel of a half empty northbound TTC train at seven in the morning, wearing my ugly navy blue dress pants and scratchy uniform shirt. I drew parallels between my reality and the musical and came to the profound realization that Spring Awakening was my life.

"Thought is suspect,
And money is their idol,
And nothing is okay unless it's scripted in their Bible.
But I know there's so much more to find
Just in looking through myself, and not at them.
Still, I know to trust my own true mind, and to say:
There's a way through this..."

(Lyrics from "All That's Known" from Spring Awakening)

This quote from Spring Awakening by Stevan Sater and Duncan Sheik deeply explains what my life was like at a Catholic High School in Toronto. The musical, which was performed on Broadway in 2006, is based on a 1891 German play of the same name by Frank Wedikind. The musical has traditional dialogue, but incorporates more modern music in the styles of grunge, rock, gospel, and folk that lets the audience know the internal worlds of the characters. After years of attending Toronto alternative schools with a left-wing, social justice focus, I believed that most of our society was very progressive. Spring Awakening opened my eyes to the reality that Canadian culture is still repressive.

My introduction to Spring Awakening was watching a musical theatre class perform a number from it at their high school open house when I was in grade 8. I decided not to apply to that school because I was accepted early to a Catholic arts high school, after a very competitive audition process. I was so proud. I thought uniforms would be fun (they weren't), and I thought it would be just as open-minded as my previous school. When grade 9 had started, I remembered that I liked the sound of Spring Awakening and decided to download and listen to it on my commute to school. I loved it so much that I listened to it every day. I even memorized what song should be playing at each part of my journey. I watched, listened, read, and wrote about Spring Awakening every chance I could. Little did I know the effect the musical would have on my life.

Spring Awakening is about Melchior (Jonathan Groff), Wendla (Lea Michelle), and Moritz (John Gallagher Jr.), three teenagers living in Germany in the late 1800s. It discusses how society is blinded by religion and how science is ignored. Melchior is an atheist who thinks for himself in a world of close-minded Christians.

Wendla is naive about the world and wants to learn more, despite her mother keeping her very sheltered. Moritz is doing very poorly in school. He battles depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts, in a world where he is expected to be perfect and failure is not an option. In the end, Wendla gets pregnant with Melchior's child and dies after her mother forces her to have an abortion, Moritz kills himself because he felt trapped in his life, and Melchior is left all alone to mourn his two friends. All the characters are trying to learn about themselves and the world, while trapped in a repressive society. Teenagers still feel trapped. This musical helped me realize that this is the way society has been for years, and even more specifically that this musical was my life at a Catholic school in grade 9.

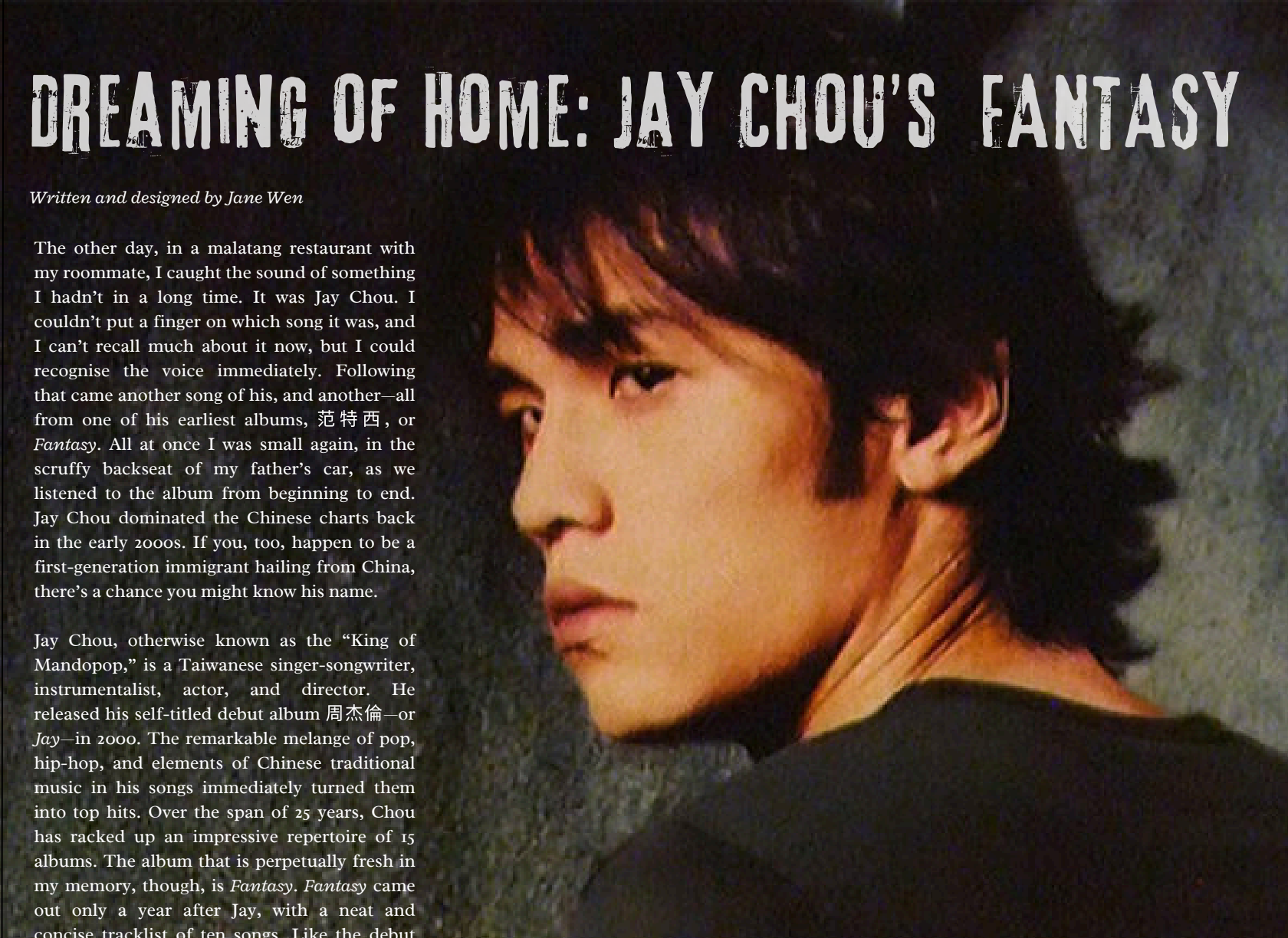
I was Melchior, I knew I didn't belong. I was Wendla, wanting to know more about the world. I was Moritz, wanting to do so well in school. And like Melchior, I knew I was "totally fucked". I knew it was not ok to get a pamphlet in school teaching that "chastity is the way" and saying that "if you are gay, you should pray". I was horrified when the religion teacher started to cry after a student asked her what God thinks of gay people. I knew that my trans friend should not have been scared to tell the teacher to switch to he/him pronouns. I knew when I submitted a story about two girls going to prom together, that it was wrong for the school to refuse to publish it because I might be bullied, despite me giving my consent. I knew that banning uniform skirts and constantly policing girls' clothing was sexist. Spring Awakening helped me realize I was in danger of becoming like the characters in the musical. I decided to "walk on by [myself], and not with them". I applied to attend a liberal public arts high school in grade 10, which ironically enough was the school that introduced me to Spring Awakening.

After attending left wing alternative schools for most of my life, I thought that all schools in Canada were equally progressive. Listening to Spring Awakening helped me realize that the Catholic school I was attending was repressive, sexist, and homophobic, in many similar ways to the 1880s Germany the musical was set in. Unlike Moritz, I successfully left the unwelcoming society and attended a new school in Grade 10, returning to the place I had first heard the musical. This was my Spring Awakening.

Written by Eleanor Wiens Farrelly
Designed by Louise Lee

DREAMING OF HOME: JAY CHOU'S FANTASY

Written and designed by Jane Wen



The other day, in a malatang restaurant with my roommate, I caught the sound of something I hadn't in a long time. It was Jay Chou. I couldn't put a finger on which song it was, and I can't recall much about it now, but I could recognise the voice immediately. Following that came another song of his, and another—all from one of his earliest albums, 范特西, or *Fantasy*. All at once I was small again, in the scruffy backseat of my father's car, as we listened to the album from beginning to end. Jay Chou dominated the Chinese charts back in the early 2000s. If you, too, happen to be a first-generation immigrant hailing from China, there's a chance you might know his name.

Jay Chou, otherwise known as the "King of Mandopop," is a Taiwanese singer-songwriter, instrumentalist, actor, and director. He released his self-titled debut album 周杰倫—or *Jay*—in 2000. The remarkable melange of pop, hip-hop, and elements of Chinese traditional music in his songs immediately turned them into top hits. Over the span of 25 years, Chou has racked up an impressive repertoire of 15 albums. The album that is perpetually fresh in my memory, though, is *Fantasy*. *Fantasy* came out only a year after Jay, with a neat and concise tracklist of ten songs. Like the debut album, it is wholly composed and produced by Chou, with lyrical assistance from Vincent Fang and Vivian Hsu. The album cover is a close-up of Chou, who stares at us with a solemn, almost unforgiving glint in his eyes, and his mouth slightly parted. Black hair falls into his face, and the rest of him is concealed in a big burgundy hoodie. He seems as if he is about to admit something to us, something that will shake us to our core.

It turns out that the album was, in fact, unforgettable. *Fantasy* became an instant classic upon its release, snatching the title of best-selling album in Taiwan in 2001 and as a result, spreading Chou to the Chinese mainland. Eventually, it made its way into my father's car. My father listened to it with a religious fervour those days. Though his music taste varied widely—including anything from Sade to Whitney Houston to The Carpenters, from the days he would surreptitiously turn up the Hong Kong radio with his college mates to see the stuff that was popular outside of the mainland—Chou was still at the front and centre. He—and inevitably, I—listened to it on the way to preschool, to my grandparents' place, to our little apartment tucked away in a gated community. Even after I turned five and we moved away, bits and pieces of it would come back to me.

In *Fantasy*, Chou is invested in relaying a certain feeling of nostalgia. It's not only my personal relationship with the album that makes me say so—though it takes me back to my childhood and its alleyways, its dim shopping malls, its sweltering sidewalks, Chou manages to gesture toward a longing entirely of his own. A lot of this longing presents itself in his signature sound. *Fantasy* in particular features brassy cymbals, piano melodies, crisp and slightly overlapping beats, and classical Chinese instruments like the zither or flute that occasionally peek through. Chou part raps, part sings, and often combines the both of them—conveying a wide range of emotion with a sultry, raspy voice that is sometimes admittedly mumbly, but at its best, penetrating. What ties these songs together are the traces of nostalgia, most of all in the songs with poignant melodies and swaying, undulating rhythms. The lyrics, too, make this case—in "上海—九四三," or "Shanghai 1943," Chou recalls: "The house covered with beech wood planks was still filled with the smell of/The hot bean paste that Grandma made that year." In the famous final track, "安靜," or "Silence," he sings forlornly: "All that is left is the piano to talk to me the whole day/The sleeping cello is quiet and old." Each note and lyric is permeated with the same ache to return, the same longing for something that isn't necessarily here anymore.

Fantasy might not be the greatest album I've ever heard, but its songs instantly catapult me back to my youth. Even as the waiter from the malatang restaurant brought over our steaming bowls of noodles, I thought about the people who had tossed our ingredients into a bowl, who had stirred the soup—what was *Fantasy*, an album from almost twenty five years ago, to them? Did it also take them back to a place that they know little of now, that they want nothing more than to return to? Does it do the same for my father? There's not much I can talk about with my father anymore. But sometimes, I can put on a Jay Chou song and we don't have to say anything. We just turn the volume all the way up.

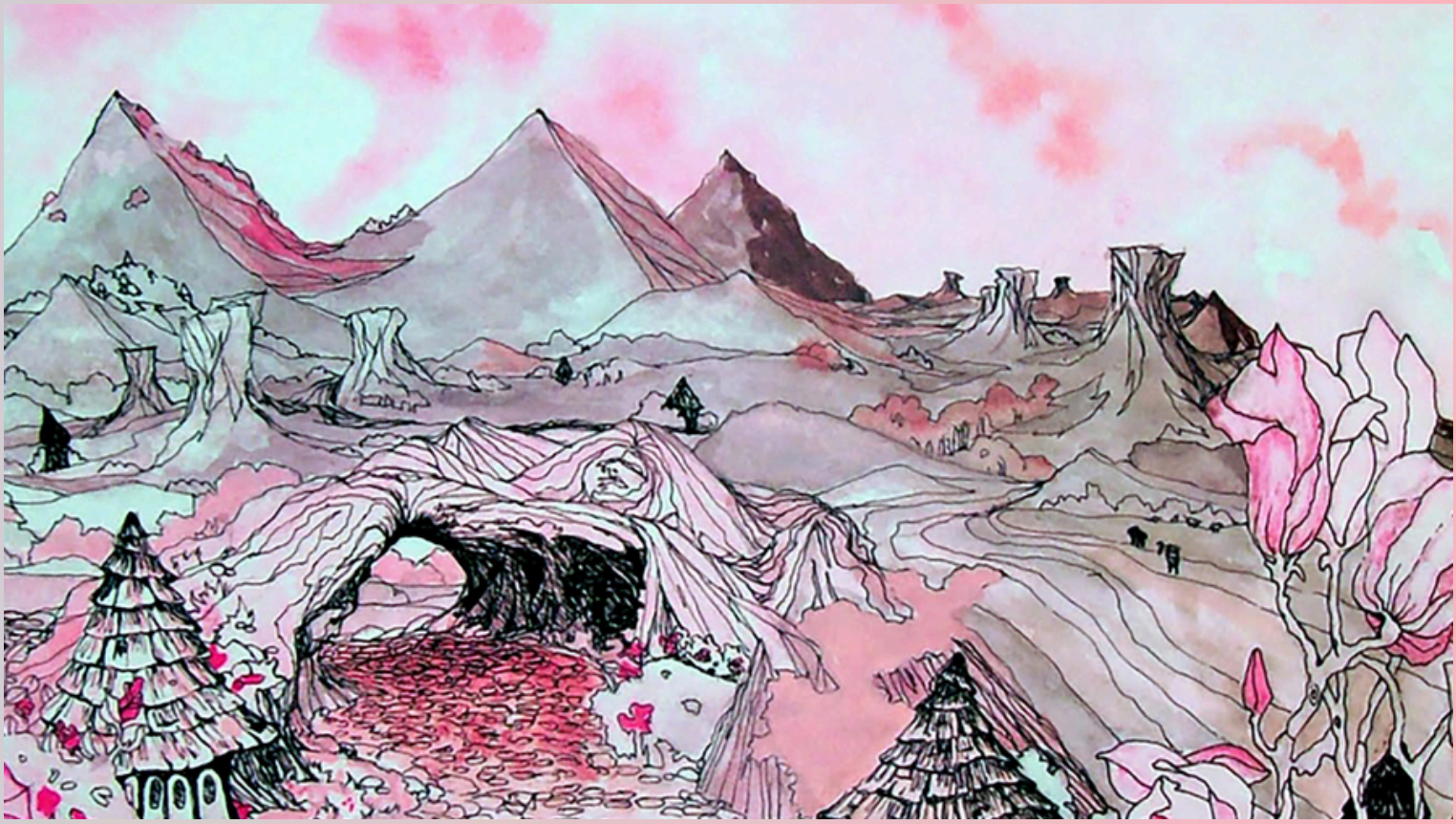
The Canterbury Scene: An Introduction

Written by Hayden Zahary
Designed by Janelle Mees and Hayden Zahary

When we talk about music scenes, it's usually big cities that are mentioned most often. Places like New York, LA, London or Berlin - and, of course, that makes a certain amount of sense. First of all, these places just have the most people, and second, their large sizes mean that they can accommodate the kinds of institutions that musicians need. But this focus on major urban centres also has its drawbacks. People who live outside these places might feel trapped. If they aren't able to relocate, it might seem that they're stuck in artistic isolation, with no way to access a network of people to work with. However, that's hardly true - and a quick perusal of the history of the Canterbury scene of the late '60s and early '70s can demonstrate that, as well as expose us to a bunch of fantastic artists.

Canterbury is a town in the southeast of England which is mostly known for being the hometown of the Church of England and the setting of a poem from the 14th century. Its current population is about 44,000. Although it is smaller than that of North Bay, Ontario, it spawned an incredible explosion of music in the '60s and '70s, which started among artistic-minded young people attending the town's arts university. Around 1964, Hugh Hopper, Brian Hopper and Robert Wyatt, all of whom were interested in both the British Invasion rock of the time and forward-thinking jazz, came together to start playing music. They were quickly introduced to the one other long-haired man in Canterbury, Kevin Ayers. Ayers, Wyatt and the Hoppers formed a band called the Wilde Flowers, which played mostly R&B tunes and covers infused with an experimental sensibility. This group went through members quickly, as Ayers and Wyatt left in 1966 to found a new band called Soft Machine, alongside a couple of other local musicians. Various creatives interested in the newest rock and jazz sounds of the '60s filtered through the Wilde Flowers, a handful of whom formed Caravan. Soft Machine and Caravan would become the most well-known acts from the Canterbury scene.

Although the bands vary musically, the Canterbury sound generally combines psychedelic rock with pop and often experimental varieties of jazz. The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane were all touchstones for this scene. Some artists also incorporate classical or blues elements. In general though, the music is pretty accessible at first glance. It features music that is highly melodic and light in tone, but with freeform soloing and odd song structures that make it just as obtuse as it is accessible. A number of those involved with the scene would take those experimental tendencies further later into the '70s. Some, like Soft Machine and National Health, shifted towards free jazz, while others got involved in later underground progressive rock movements such as Rock in Opposition. The two most well-known albums from this little microgenre are Soft Machine's 1968 self-titled and Caravan's 1971 In the Land of Grey and Pink. These two serve as great examples of its sound. The former, a strikingly guitar-less and minimal album, is dominated by fuzzy organ and loose, jazzy drumming. Songs like "We Did It Again" and "Why Are We Sleeping?" turn into somewhat psychedelic mantras, while the album also includes poppier tunes like "Lullabye Letter" (which also heavily features kazoo) and the free-flowing "Why Am I So Short?" Caravan's album is full of the kind of peculiar British whimsy that this scene often played with, with songs about golf course love affairs, fairytale lands where drugs grow wild and pigs flying. The album is super melodic, and almost saccharine at points like "Love To Love You" but also features a wide variety of instruments and terrific jazz improvisation. Keyboardist Dave Sinclair, whose distinctive playing style of a mix of very lengthy stretched-out notes and rapid-fire noodling originated from his use of a guitar fuzz pedal with his organ which would feedback if he ever stopped playing while it was on. Richard Sinclair's singing is subdued, soft and perhaps slightly tongue-in-cheek. The 22-minute suite "Nine Feet Underground" might be the best starting point to get an idea of what Canterbury sounds like, with a combination of virtually all its distinct elements appearing during its runtime.



Although the bands vary musically, the Canterbury sound generally combines psychedelic rock with pop and often experimental varieties of jazz. The Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane were all touchstones for this scene. Some artists also incorporate classical or blues elements. In general though, the music is pretty accessible at first glance. It features music that is highly melodic and light in tone, but with freeform soloing and odd song structures that make it just as obtuse as it is accessible. A number of those involved with the scene would take those experimental tendencies further later into the '70s. Some, like Soft Machine and National Health, shifted towards free jazz, while others gotget involved in later underground progressive rock movements such as Rock in Opposition. The two most well-known albums from this little microgenre are Soft Machine's 1968 self-titled and Caravan's 1971 In the Land of Grey and Pink. These two serve as great examples of its sound. The former, a strikingly guitar-less and minimal album, is dominated by fuzzy organ and loose, jazzy drumming. Songs like "We Did It Again" and "Why Are We Sleeping?" turn into somewhat psychedelic mantras, while the album also includes poppier tunes like "Lullabye Letter" (which also heavily features kazoo) and the free-flowing "Why Am I So Short?" Caravan's album is full of the kind of peculiar British whimsy that this scene often played with, with songs about golf course love affairs, fairytale lands where drugs grow wild and pigs flying. The album is super melodic, and almost saccharine at points like "Love To Love You" but also features a wide variety of instruments and terrific jazz improvisation. Keyboardist Dave Sinclair, whose distinctive playing style of a mix of very lengthy stretched-out notes and rapid-fire noodling originated from his use of a guitar fuzz pedal with his organ which would feedback if he ever stopped playing while it was on. Richard Sinclair's singing is subdued, soft and perhaps slightly tongue-in-cheek. The 22-minute suite "Nine Feet Underground" might be the best starting point to get an idea of what Canterbury sounds like, with a combination of virtually all its distinct elements appearing during its runtime.

While Soft Machine and Caravan originated as offshoots of the Wilde Flowers, they too would prove to be the origin point of other artists. Robert Wyatt and Kevin Ayers would both later begin solo careers, and Wyatt also led the sometimes politically-driven Canterbury band Matching Mole. Matching Mole also included members of Caravan, while others from that band would join up with London musicians to form Hatfield and the North. Early Soft Machine member Daevid Allen would move to Paris after he was banned from returning to the UK after overstaying his visa, and start the long-running and wonderfully silly band Gong, which other Canterbury-associated musicians would join. Like-minded people from other parts of England would also come to join in - National Health and Egg would come from London to Canterbury, and members of earlier bands would end up forming Gilgamesh and Khan there. There's a ton of music to delve into from all these acts, but I'd particularly recommend Matching Mole's self-titled record, the second Soft Machine, anything by Caravan and, my personal favourite: Hatfield and the North's The Rotters Club.

The story of the Canterbury scene serves as a great example of a musical community which came out of nowhere in a place which was far from an urban centre and without a strong artistic infrastructure. They had an institution to attract people with the same interests, which is certainly a big help, but I don't think is necessary. Once a few people are pursuing an idea together, it can quickly attract people from other places who have the same interests or people who live nearby and just want to get involved. Of course, its acts had to come into London to play shows - and indeed, some of its main participants have denied its existence because of that - but it was still fundamentally run by people living out in that medium-sized seaside town.

CITY SOUNDTRACK:

Songs and Stories from Across Toronto

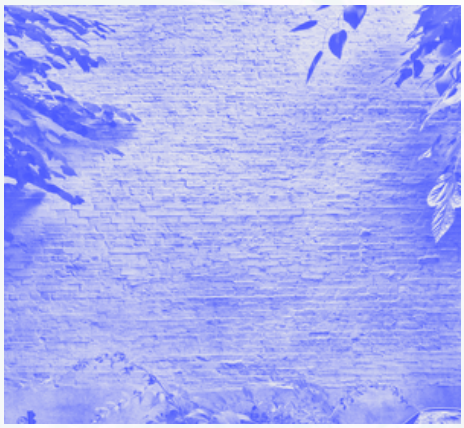
"That night in Toronto, with its checkerboard floors" is the lyric that comes to mind each time something beautiful happens to me in this city. While I didn't grow up here, or as a fan of the Tragically Hip, "Bobcaygeon" has taken on a new meaning over the last year and a half. Attending U of T meant dropping everything and upending my half-baked life in British Columbia, where I'd spent the last fourteen years in a smallish town doing absolutely nothing. Coming from somewhere that hasn't had a movie theatre since 2012, moving across the country was a massive change for me. Between starting university, making friends and carving out a place in this sprawling metropolis, a lot of things have happened. After all, making a place home never promised to be easy. Inspired by my perpetual nostalgia and my unending love for those closest to me, here's a look at some of my favourite moments from my time here and the soundtrack that accompanied them.

November 18th, 2023: "Social Jetlag" by Beach Fossils

The playback: the first frost is setting in, and I am more alive than I've ever been. The night has finally come, and the ticket I impulse-bought back home blinks in anticipation on my phone. The line to the Phoenix Concert Theatre is shorter than expected, but it still stretches down the cracked sidewalk anyways. Across the street, the lights flick on in a house. It seems that a venue can make its home anywhere in this city. I strike up a conversation with some recent grads in front of me. One of them has been a Beach Fossils fan since Tumblr was still a main attraction, and the other is just looking for a night out with her friend. I'm here for the opening band, an odd homage to a friend who didn't fully make it out of our youth. There is a soft ache in Turnover's music that reminds me of them. Outside the venue, we discuss everything from the coming winter to chicken sandwiches. The doors open, and we drift to the barricade effortlessly. Jammed in with the crowd, I finally feel as if I'm a part of something. The first two bands play, cheers rise and fall, and people sing alone. The main act waltzes onto the stage as if they've never belonged anywhere else. Indie rock pours out of the speakers, harkening back to a time full of denim, fishnet tights and highly curated blogs. I dance and sway, even if I don't know the words. "Social Jetlag" starts, and cell phone lights go up alongside the opening chords. When I turn to face the crowd, I'm met with a hundred small stars. The song I'd never heard before this moment echoes across the venue, somehow christening the next four years of my life in an instant. Something has snapped into place, and I'm suddenly aware that I'm in exactly the right place. As the show reaches its end, I snap a photo: Beach Fossils are captured on an orange-tinged stage, mid strum, with my friend's head just out of frame. The photo becomes my desktop wallpaper, grounding me in a moment of pure belonging. The song still finds its way into my headphones when I need a reminder of home.

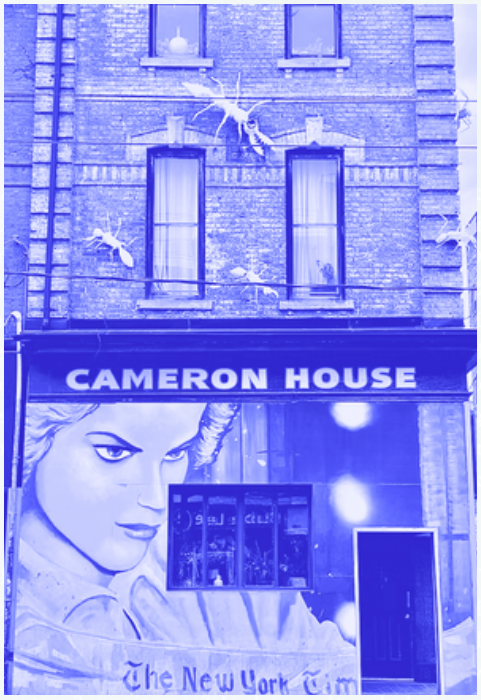
August 9th, 2024: "Blitzkrieg Bop" by The Ramones

The playback: I have spent too much of the summer awake before dawn. Two jobs means bracing for impact on the morning commute to summer camp, dousing myself in sunscreen and mentally preparing for eight hours of constant noise.



German has become easier than English in the right context, and all I can think about is counting my campers like sheep in a herd. On the morning shift, my coworker and I take turns playing anything but pop songs for the kids. We play Queen and Led Zeppelin, Green Day and All Time Low, keeping ourselves awake by singing along. Talking about music felt good during that oddly lonely summer. Armed with a shared love for "Brighton Rock", we swore to make sure the campers were exposed to something other than Taylor Swift. Though most of our choices were not a success with this tough crowd, "Blitzkrieg Bop" elicited a series of cheers that made me feel almost human again. We would play it while they cleaned up and got ready to go to their groups, and a refrain of "Hey! Ho! Let's go!" could be heard throughout the building. On the last day of the camp, we had a small party to celebrate. When the song came on, there was no greater feeling of vindication than hearing 30 small children scream along to The Ramones. Suddenly, the hours I'd spent wiping tears and filling water bottles were all worth it. I'd survived my contract mostly unscathed, and I'd even managed to impart some musical wisdom to the next generation.

December 29th, 2024: "Psychedelic Sally" by The Doghouse Orchestra



The playback: my first night out in quite a while after having worked all through winter break. Shockingly warm weather, but the same old coat and boots anyways. The Doghouse Orchestra are playing the final night of their residency for this year, and The Cameron House is packed. The crowd is as varied as I've ever seen it, from regulars and diehard fans to people who just wandered in off the street after hearing a crescendo of brass instruments. I am mixed in with the strangers, and mostly accompanied by people I have just met. The band starts late and plays hard, almost desperate to make their mark before the new year rolls in. The small stage is full, with each member musically jousting for their place on the riser and in the song. The singer's smoke-filled voice blares through the speakers at a volume that would be deafening any other night. People dance, and others push through the tight crowd cradling their drinks. A woman in a gold shirt knocks into me once or twice, smiling. She had the right idea, ditching her coat on a windowsill somewhere.

Tonight is the first night I have ever passed in public. Men tilt their chins at me, a woman asks me how I like the band with a twinkle in her eye, and the new people I've met don't bother asking me for my pronouns. The venue is hot, and we drift in and out between songs to stand on the street corner. People pass a joint, we talk about school and where we call home. The band is audible from the outside, and we rush in to hear the trombone player sing a few songs. The evening is full of bright colours and good music, much needed in the midst of winter. In that dim room, I remember that the city is alive even when I am not a part of the crowd. The world extends again beyond my bedroom. "Psychedelic Sally" ends, but the night lurches on.

Picking even a handful of moments to write about was harder than anticipated. I've experienced things and met people here that I'd never have imagined in high school. Toronto has quickly become more of a home than anywhere I've ever been. These flashbacks are simply a small part of the bigger picture. Here, even the mundane feels full of life. Walking down the street with my headphones on has become beautiful. I wouldn't trade that for anything.

Written by Finch Strub
Designed by Jonah Page

THE SOUND OF GEN Z PUNK

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY SERENA HAO

Characterized by talk singing and spunk, the 2020s saw an emergence of a new wave of music in Britain and Ireland. Bands like Black Country, New Road, Squid, Dry Cleaning, and Shame are frontmen in a wave of Gen Z rock. Ironic, political, and chronically online, these bands are full of charm. Despite their extremely varied sounds, they are oftentimes grouped together for the general spirit of their music and their encapsulation of the 2020s zeitgeist.

One connection some of these bands do have is The Windmill: a venue in Brixton that played a huge part in the creation of this scene. Bands like Black Midi got their start there, and the venue's consistent support for experimental music led to the gradual formation of a strong community of those on the forefront of music. Black Country, New Road and Black Midi specifically became very closely related through the venue around 2020. They often played together for live shows as "Black Midi, New Road" and covered each other's songs. Their close relationship is seen further in referential lyrics, like Black Country, New Road's tongue in cheek "we fell in love in front of black midi" in "Track X", the opener of their album For the First Time.

Without a formal name, this scene has been referred to as "Crank Wave" by NME, while NPR called them "The Post-Brexit New Wave". The latter importantly emphasizes the political nature of many of these bands. Several of them take a stance on political issues in a particularly Gen Z way: through irony and satire. Black Midi's "Welcome to Hell", off of their album of the same name, is a clear criticism of militarism and war. Lyrics like "Go get them, son, now your life begins" and "If not for you it would've been cholera, malaria, or some Eastern disease" mock pro-war sentiments that encourage young people to blindly kill for their country. Similarly, their song "Near DT, MI" satirizes politicians' lackluster response to the Flint, Michigan water crisis: "They're loving the water, they breathe in the water/ They fight in the water, they're fixing the water/ What's in the water? Here in the water". Another band, Squid, criticizes the monotony that is Capitalism in "GSK": "On Concrete Island, well, I hope my dinner is warm/ On Concrete Island, I wave at the businessmen/ On Concrete Island, well, I've been here far too long". Our current political landscape is the backdrop for all of these bands' work. Jaded critiques of current affairs litters many of their songs, which pairs them perfectly with young people tired of endless conflict.

While these bands dip into politics, their music is by no means solemn. Alongside their more serious critiques is an encapsulation of the digital age. Yard Act makes fun of the "boomer" mentality on their song "The Overload": "Kids these days, they think they've been hard done by/ But they've never even looked at an iron lung like I did once". Dry Cleaning absurdly references the iconic Instagram filters in "Scratchcard Lanyard": "It's a Tokyo bouncy ball/ It's an Oslo bouncy ball/ It's a Rio de Janeiro bouncy ball filter!". Lastly, in Black Country, New Road's "Science Fair", they sing: "As I move from one micro-influencer to another". The combination of jokes and devastatingly real sociopolitical issues really capture the realities of the internet and growing up in such a tumultuous time. Bands in this scene emulate the emotional dissonance of scrolling from tragic news headlines to memes on platforms like Tiktok or X. The sardonicism they exude mirrors the feeling caused by this constant emotional whiplash exactly. This feeling is unique to a generation defined by the internet, and is exactly why I think of these bands as encapsulating the spirit of young people. Faced with crumbling political institutions, global tragedies, and the rise of potentially disastrous technology, young people can't help but relate with their apathy and irony.

Although they do embody the spirit of young people today: jaded and weary, I find their music is only one half of a necessary dialogue. When faced with atrocities, it's easy to satirize, to criticize, and to mock, but it isn't easy to make a real difference. Gen Z sometimes prides themselves as revolutionary changemakers, but how much of that can be done through irony? This emerging scene is a real reflection of a prevalent mindset, but I think it must be paired with equal amounts of sincerity and empathy. To not only criticize from the sidelines, but to really change how things are, is to put down the shield that irony creates. While I do love to indulge in the sass of "crank wave" bands, it's necessary not to get too immersed in its apathy and to remain hopeful that a better world is possible. Besides, to merely criticize and not act on any of these remarks is to be just as indolent as the politicians they critique in the first place.

The Hip Showed Me Canada

NEIL YOUNG ONCE TOLD ROLLING STONE THAT "THE GREAT CANADIAN DREAM IS TO GET OUT". I CERTAINLY DON'T BLAME HIM.

My dad seemingly took Young's sentiment to heart when, like many, he moved from Canada to America for his education.

Growing up in the states as a half-Canadian I would be given flashes of its cultural cannon from my dad, but it wasn't until I moved to Canada for university (going against the advice of Young and my dad) that I started considering what it meant to be Canadian. Life in Toronto felt so similar to life back in America that I began looking for what was distinctly Canadian. This search for Canadian culture brought me to The Tragically Hip, regarded by many as the quintessential Canadian band. Quite quickly, I began to understand the connection between the band and the country.

One of the first songs I listened to was "Bobcaygeon," a love song about a cop who works in Toronto has to commute into the city from Bobcaygeon, a small town a few hours away, that embodies everything about the spirit of small town Canadian living. In the song, when describing the sky above Toronto, Gord Downie sings "Yeah, the sky was dull and hypothetical", while Bobcaygeon's sky was "Where I saw the constellations reveal themselves one star at a time". Listening to how the band described the beauty of such a simple place like Bobcaygeon had me seeing these rural communities as a part of the tapestry of Canada.

The Hip had a way of incorporating Canadian life into their songs, like how the song "Wheat Kings" is about the exoneration of David Milgaard, a man who spent 23 years wrongfully convicted for murder. Or in the song "Pigeon Camera," where French bilingualism is described as something that was "handsome at the auction" but "grew up into something we could no longer contain", providing commentary to how anglophone Canada would be embarrassed to have Quebec leave the union via referendum.

After listening to the music I hopped on the phone with my dad, and was quickly greeted with a shared love for this Canadian icon. He began relishing in the songs that described pieces of his childhood, like his home province of Saskatchewan. He told me about their last concert, performed after they toured the country at the news that lead singer Gord Downie had been diagnosed with cancer, and how all of Canada tuned into that concert in Kingston. It was wonderful to hear how the band touched the hearts of so many people and it began to help me realize why they were so important to Canada's culture.

Often, when I thought about the Canadian music scene I didn't feel like they had a distinct sound. I felt like artists like Drake or Justin Bieber could have been born in America and there would not have been a difference in their sound. This also harkened back to Young's sentiment that Candians left Canada to make it big. Even so, even after all of his denial of the Canadian way, Neil Young concerts in Canada still managed to bring all Candians behind a man who they still consider an icon of their country.

Despite how far an artist goes away from Canada (Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen, etc.) there is this everlasting love for their fellow countrymen. While I used to believe that there was a lack of Canadian identity in their music, I now believe it is quite the contrary. Canadians are always Canadian, and there is an inescapable unity of love between the artists and their country that I have never seen anywhere else. When I listen to the Hip now, it is a legacy of a country being sent out for the world to listen to. The ability to channel the hearts of so many people into music is so rarely seen today that with the constant globalization of music I doubt that there will be another band ever with the same level of regional impact that The Hip had.

As I have begun my foray into Canadian Music, I appreciate where I come from and I have hope that a band may come along one day with such vigor; one that our generation can look to as icons of Canadian culture.

Written By Zacharia Husain
Designed by Jonah Page

A Glimpse into the Mongolian Metal Scene

Written by Shayla Little Maclean
Photos by Temuulen Munkhbat (@nothingbutnothingness)
Designed by Hayden Zahary

Antronum

There is so much music in the world, existing and actively being created, and in hindsight I feel silly that I didn't expect Mongolian metal to be a very real and thriving force.

I first met Ujin, a first year psychology and statistics student hailing from Mongolia, at a concert in downtown Toronto. I don't hear much about Mongolia and I've never met anyone from there, so I asked her a lot of questions about the country and what life is like over there in a curious, child-like manner. Isn't the land super uninhabitable? Yes, there's tons of mountains and deserts and it's one of the least densely populated countries in the world. How do people live over there? Are there villages or cities? About half of the population live near the one major city in Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar. And I have to know, what's the music like over there? I would soon learn the answer to this question, and you will too.

In and around Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia lies an active metal scene, which my new friend is very familiar with. Ujin knows a lot of the figures in the scene personally, as it's a relatively tight-knit community. Through Ujin, I managed to come into contact with Billy, the frontman of the Mongolian death metal band Antronum. I asked Billy and Ujin about a handful of subjects to learn more about this unique scene, the people in it, and what influences them to create new metal music. The following material incorporates one interview I conducted with Billy, and one with Ujin, asking similar questions to both individuals.

Shayla Little (interviewer): First off, what's your name, age, where you're from, and some information about your band.

Billy (Antronum): Hello, I am Billy, and I'm I9 years old. I was born and raised in Ulaanbaatar, and I'm the bassist for Antronum. Our band has four members: Achaa, the I9-year-old vocalist; Chinbat, the I8- year-old guitarist; and Orgil, the I7-year-old drummer. Antronum was founded on September II, 2022.
Our vocalist, Achbilegt, founded the band driven by his love for metal and his determination to breathe new life into Mongolia's fading metal scene. Shortly after, Chinbat (guitarist) and I (Billy, bassist) joined. After going through six drummers, we finally found the perfect fit with Orgil.
Over time, we've connected with many fellow teens from the music scene including Anhbayr, founder of an indie studio Wendigorecords, who helped us record our first EP, "Incarnation". We've also had great support from friends like Mergen, who takes concert photos at underground and festival shows. If you want a glimpse of the Mongolian music scene, check out his Instagram: @mergennn_t!

SL: Are there any parts of Mongolian life that influence your music such as political issues, living conditions, unique cultural subjects? Or is your subject matter primarily personal?

BA: Our influences come from bands such as Waking the Cadaver, Suffocation, and others. The subjects we explore include gore, ants, and occasionally even children's stories like The Three Little Pigs. We strive to balance the gore with humor and fun!

Ujin: People are definitely conscious about the misgivings around the world, but I'd say a lot of these songs are more concerned about personal struggles. Being young and broke, dysfunctional families. You know how Toronto can get pretty depressing in the winter? Yeah, it's worse over there.

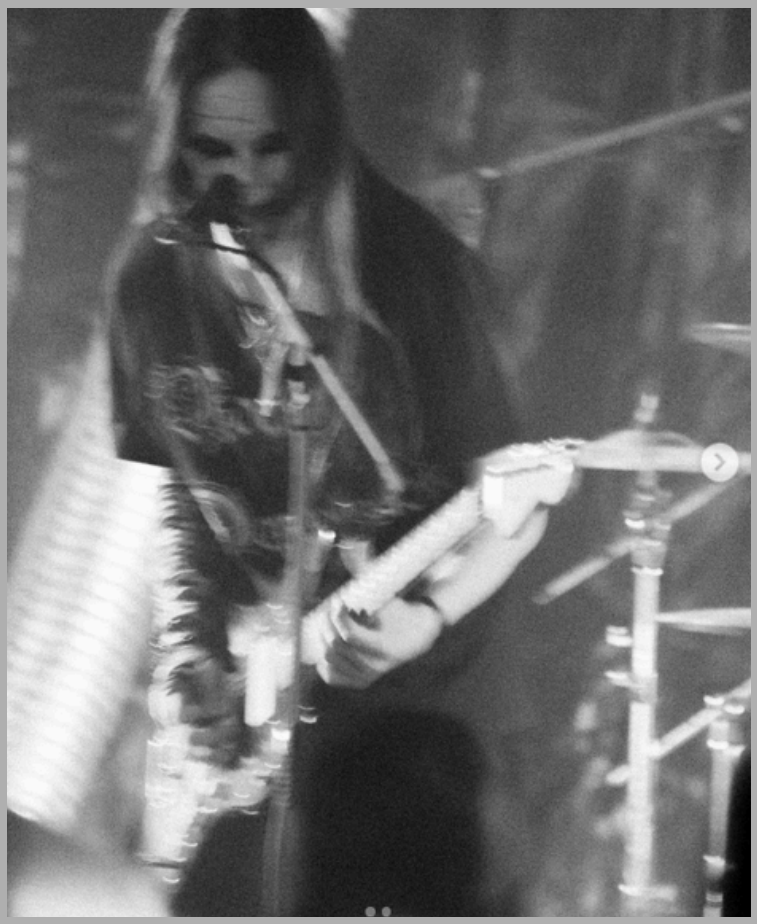
SL: What about location-wise? Do people listen to lots of Western music, Russian music, or any other locations? LIke, I listen to a Georgian metal band that is very good.

Ujin: I would say it's largely based on western influences, then the specific, like obscure or niche influences would kind of depend on each person. Western music has been around in Mongolia for a long time. My grandma used to listen to ABBA, and my dad told me him and his friends used to listen to Marilyn Manson, and I was like “woah, I didn’t know you were chill like that”.

SL: Are there any genres, subgenres, or bands you really enjoy or that inspire your music, Mongolian or not?

BA: Our primary metal subgenre is Slamming Brutal Death Metal, and our undisputed favorite band of all time is Waking The Cadaver! Early on, we drew inspiration from Zugeer L, a Mongolian Black Metal band, as well as many hardcore bands. Specifically, Kublai Khan TX has been a big influence on us. The reason is that they keep their music simple, catchy, and heavy, which is something we aim for in our own songs. We like to keep things straightforward— not overly complex.

SL: How do you primarily discover new music and share your music with others? Is it through Spotify, TikTok, file sharing, or YouTube?



Black metal artist Jaka Sartayul

BA: We primarily use Youtube and Spotify to discover new music. Sometimes, we use SoundCloud as well. [Antronum’s] songs are available on all the mainstream platforms!

UJ: Spotify is super popular, as well as Youtube. Tiktok is very music-oriented, a lot of people find music through there. The same music becomes popular everywhere because everyone’s on tiktok and the for you page, so people in Mongolia listen to Deftones and have mullets and dyed hair like people do in the west.

SL: Mongolia is bordered by Russia and China, so I’m curious, do you guys have any issues with censorship?

UJ: Nah, we’re definitely better than our neighbors [on that front]. The government doesn’t have a large attitude towards censorship.

SL: Are there any bands or artists you would recommend to someone who is unfamiliar to the Mongolian metal scene, and wants to give it a listen?

BA: There are so many amazing up-and-coming bands, as well as long-established ones, in Mongolia right now. In metal, we'd recommend Break The Cycle (Metalcore), Growl of Clown (Deathcore), and Karmantic (Atmospheric Black Metal). Outside of metal, there's this band called Teresa in The Moon (New-Wave/Post-Punk) that you should definitely check out!

UJ: Some that I like are The Shy Poopers, GraveforesT, and Growl of Clown.

Check out Shayla’s playlist with the QR code below:

The Rise and Fall of a Deep South Princess:

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ETHEL CAIN

Written by Tyson Telfer
Designed by Serena Hao

Making waves in the indie music scene upon the release of her 2022 debut album, Hayden Anhedönia—professionally known as Ethel Cain—is an artist with an experimental and ethereal style that may be daunting to new listeners. Gaining much acclaim on TikTok and social media in recent years, Anhedönia has created a cult-following fanbase dubbed the "Daughters of Cain." The name "Ethel Cain" draws from the Bible, as does much of Anhedönia's music. Anhedönia hails from the deeply religious American South—specifically Tallahassee, Florida. The South plays a huge role in Anhedönia's life and her music, which is often described as Southern Gothic, dealing with themes of the grotesque, violence, and flawed, suffering characters. Prominent heavy and reverberating basslines in songs such as "Family Tree" makes you feel the unrelenting humidity of her swampy home state. Being raised Southern Baptist also seeps into Anhedönia's music, as she draws much inspiration from Gospel music and features a number of samples across her discography. Whether you've heard online contention about Ethel Cain's latest project, Perverts, or the Americana pop single American Teenager, or have never heard of her until stumbling on this article, I am here to guide you through your journey with once-in-a-generation talent Ethel Cain.

Golden Age

Anhedönia's 2019 six-track EP Golden Age first showcases the unique style that pervades her discography, with many layers of resounding bass and ambient background vocals creating a mysterious reverent sound. Golden Age elicits the feeling of a sweaty summer haze, one that is both deeply romantic and relentlessly punishing. Anhedönia's resonant vocals deliver hard-hitting lyrics, which at times are exceedingly dark, with a characteristic otherworldly tone that totally envelops you in the melodies. The EP closes with "Golden Age," summing up the moments of longing throughout the project with immensely cathartic instrumentals and devastating lyrics that lean towards determination for a life of "a hundred shades of gold." On this record, Anhedönia experiments with various production techniques that will be central to subsequent projects and begins to cement her signature style.

FAVOURITE TRACK: KNUCKLE VELVET

Inbred

Following Golden Age, Anhedönia released the EP Inbred, which continued to develop her distinct sound and leaned heavier into the blurring of love, lust, God, and corruption. Inbred took a darker approach than the previous EP, focusing on a love that is painful and unrewarding, accentuated by Anhedönia's trademark visceral basslines. Heavy reverb and intense electric guitar allow the EP to lean into a classic rock vibe, though Anhedönia never lets up on her dreamy production. On "God's Country," Anhedönia begs her lover, "don't sink in me with your dog teeth," and admits "we're better off if you let go," showcasing a love that is mutually destructive but simultaneously "tastes sweet." This project is a moment in Anhedönia's discography which explores the paralysis of holding onto a relationship which hurts in all the best ways.

FAVOURITE TRACK: CRUSH

Preacher's Daughter

Anhedönia's magnum opus and probably the best starting place for aspiring Daughters of Cain is her 2022 debut full-length album, Preacher's Daughter. This record is a concept album revolving around the character of Ethel Cain, from which Anhedönia derives her stage name, and the immense tragedy of her life. The album is meant to be the first in a trilogy from Anhedönia anticipated to take the bulk of her career to finish. Though far too long to explain succinctly, the narrative of the record follows Ethel Cain through her life dealing with generational trauma, her tumultuous relationship with religion, and fantasies of escapism. The story of the fictional Ethel Cain and the real artist Hayden Anhedönia are deeply connected, both starting in the same place and diverging at crucial moments. Anhedönia has said that she sees Ethel as an alternate version of herself: "She is the person I could see myself becoming," Anhedönia explains in an interview. Recorded and produced by Anhedönia alone in her bedroom, the record is the culmination of everything Anhedönia has done on her two previous EPs, mixing her dreamy, psychedelic, ominous, and cathartic styles to tell this story in just the way she wants to.

FAVOURITE TRACKS: SUN BLEACHED FLIES, THOROUGHFARE

Perverts

Anhedönia's latest project, Perverts is a mostly ambient album, boasting an impressive runtime of 89 minutes with a mere 9 tracks. This EP marks a significant change for Anhedönia's music, as it moves away from ethereal indie and into an almost horrifically dark drone music. This record offers an unparalleled listening experience with skin-crawling instrumentals and a sinister energy that settles in one's space. Between this and multiple tracks that run longer than 10 minutes, Perverts is certainly a serious undertaking, though well worth its runtime and especially rewarding on subsequent listens. As well, the record features Ethel Cain's signature themes of lust, sexuality, and struggles with religion. Anhedönia opens the record with the titular track "Perverts," which contains the Christian hymn "nearer, my God, to thee"—one that Anhedönia cites as a memory from her childhood in her Southern Baptist church. The same title track is deeply connected to the Bruce Mansfield power plant in Pennsylvania that Anhedönia sees as a brutalist "monument to God," via an Instagram post. The EP's overall disquieting, even downright scary atmosphere and extended moments of ambient noise may prove not to be a general audience's cup of tea, but unapologetically paves a lane for Ethel Cain's artform.

FAVOURITE TRACKS: AMBER WAVES, VACILLATOR

All of Anhedönia's music is deeply influenced by her upbringing in the American Deep South— from "Sunday Morning" to "Amber Waves." Despite having been raised in one of America's most downtrodden communities, Anhedönia still feels connected to her home and uses her artistry to promote her profound love for this often neglected sect. Her unique take on the Americana style coupled with her staggering and poignant lyricism makes her one of the most interesting artists right now and someone who continues to pioneer in the indie genre.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE MY MUSIC IS.

I don't know where my music

written & designed by Ella MacCormack

This all used to be easier to understand. I held the CD. I put it into the CD player. Sk8er Boi blared from the speakers. Did I know how that worked? No, but I knew where it was. How could I not? It's a disc in my hands, a stack in the corner of the room. Now, my music is in the cloud, an imperceptible digital ecosystem surrounding us. Out of sight, out of mind.

Let's wade into the digital steam together, see where it takes us.

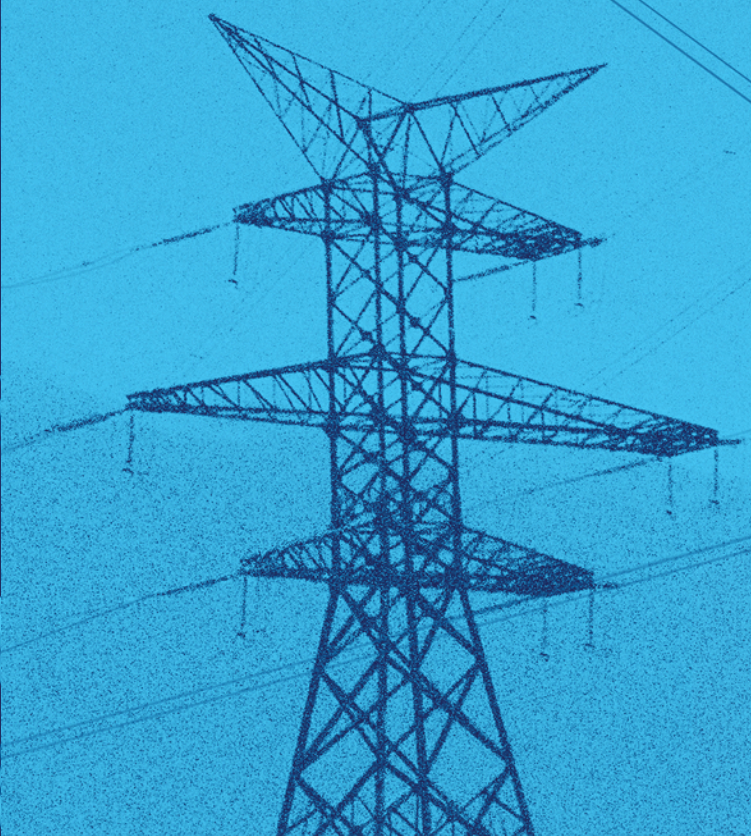
So, how did we go from physical music to digital music?

Digital streaming of music all came from the software MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3 — or as you and I know it — MP3. MP3 is a compression software, allowing audio files to be shared way easier than ever before. That compression comes at a cost, the mp3 compression loses some audio information. You might have heard some pretentious people talk about "lossy" audio before, that's what they are talking about. Physical media like CDs and vinyl don't require compression, so it is lossless. MP3s, on the other hand, are lossy. Spotify doesn't use MP3. It uses a niche audio format called Ogg Vorbis, the weirdos. This is lossy audio format too, but Spotify has artists send the files in a lossless audio file to them first.

Okay, great. My music is in the servers! Wait, so where is the server closest to me?
Well, it's complicated. In 2014, Spotify had about 42,000,000,000,000,000 bytes (42 petabytes, or 42,000 terabytes) of storage. In 2016, Spotify realized it was too much work to run all these data centers, so they transitioned towards Google's serverless cloud-based platform. But contrary to what's on the tin, serverless computing doesn't mean there are no servers. Spotify just doesn't run the physical servers anymore, someone else does.

The closest Google Cloud server is in... drumroll please... Toronto! They won't tell us where it is exactly, but your music is somewhere nestled in the same city as you. At least, cached in the same city as you. Your request doesn't have to go to the closest server, but it will get sent to the server with the lowest latency (fancy computer word for delays). This means your request could be sent to Toronto or any of Spotify or Google's servers across the world.

So that's the cloud — everywhere and nowhere at once. You can pluck music from the cloud anywhere, but it certainly doesn't live in the air next to you. Each song is buried in a tangle of servers, wires, and data centers far out of reach.



How does my request get to the server?
The answer is wires. 95% of the time, it's underwater wires. The most common kind of wire is fibre optic cable, which sends your data through pulses of light down the glass fibers like morse code. Your song request, and soon after, your song file, will be sent to and from the server through data packets using these wires.

What if I download the song? Where is it then?
When you download something from Spotify, songs, podcasts, whatever, it is stored in your phone's cache — a temporary storage area. Spotify is a bit crafty and encrypts the data, so you can't play the songs without their specific software. Buzzkill.

After all that, how does my phone get that song into my Bluetooth headphones?
Bluetooth is basically just a fancy radio. Your phone compresses the audio and transmits the signal to your headphones using ultra-high frequency radio waves. Your headphones' receiver decompresses the signal and turns it into a digital waveform. This is translated into sound using a small magnet that moves air to create vibrations. Audio is just vibrations your ear translates into brain waves. Then, Sk8r Boi.

So... what does this all mean?
We are so removed from music. We get a sense of control over our music from a user-friendly UI, building our music library in the app. All of that intentionally masks the immense power held by an invisible network controlled by private companies — monitoring my activity, monitoring your activity — all outside our awareness. Spotify processes about 1.4 trillion data points daily, including mine.

I'm not saying we all need to go live in a cabin somewhere, shilling out 40 bucks for vinyl every time we need to listen to an album. What we do need is to denaturalize our media environment, taking a moment to look around at the surveillance capitalist ecosystem that lets you play your favorite album. After all, music still exists outside of servers and algorithms. Backup your playlists. Pirate that mp3 file. Frequent Toronto's live shows. And hell, pick up that Avril Lavigne CD. You don't have to know how that works either, but no corporation keeps track of how many times you play it, that's for damn sure.

So where is our music? It's in your phone's cache, in a server in your city, in a server in a different continent, in the cloud, in the ocean, in light beams, in radio waves, in vibrations in your ear. Music also lingers in your old mixtapes and scratched CDs, waiting for someone to press play.

Folk Metal:

Somewhere in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Ireland

Written by Amelie Kolnik
Designed by Louise Lee

The hybrid genre of folk metal seems contradictory. This unique style combines atmospheric and crushing metal instrumentals with folk melodies performed on traditional instruments. It is continuously reconfigured and redefined as it absorbs the cultural and historical influences of the places where it is performed.

Metal is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of subgenres. Among them are traditional heavy metal, thrash metal, speed metal, black metal, death metal, and doom metal. In particular, folk metal draws from the heavy metal subgenre. The term “heavy metal” emerged in the global West during the 1960s and 1970s, and the genre was known to encompass the music of Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, among other bands. Heavy metal is commonly described as intense, cathartic, and aggravated. Powerful guitar solos and fierce lyrics characterize the genre; the striking vocals, to some, are reminiscent of classic rock.

By contrast, traditional folk is a genre unique to each country from which it originates. The term comes from the German “volk” which translates to “the people.” Folk music is precisely that: the music of the people. The genre predominantly arose in and spread throughout rural communities, being passed down by ear in small social groups. Folk varies extensively by region, the overall genre surpassing linguistic and instrumental boundaries. The genre is particularly important in relation to classical music and, more broadly, political movements. The nationalist musical movement of the nineteenth century demonstrated this connection, when composers made an effort to incorporate folk music in their works to index a strong sense of national identity.

Folk metal developed throughout the 1990s in Europe. Notably, musicians in Ireland, England, and Germany began to create music in the heavy metal style while incorporating folk instruments. Many of the earliest folk metal bands drew on Celtic music; Cruachan, Primordial, and Eluveitie are some of the most celebrated bands performing in this style. In Cruachan’s song "The Hawthorn," the somber lyrical are especially characteristic of metal, and the imagery is pastoral, which is exemplary of folk: "God is lost, love is lost/Among the hawthorn, oh/The dank of time pervades the air/The shepherd tends his flock."

The genre rapidly earned recognition across Western and Southern Europe, and soon gained popularity within Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union. Folk music plays a significant role in Russian history—specifically, the emphasis on folk was key in the political construction of Soviet identity. However, folk metal encompasses traditional Russian melodies *and* distinctly Western musical influences, which would have been deemed forces of social corruption within the Soviet Union. Arkona and Butterfly Temple, both originating in Russia, as well as the Ukrainian band Motankahave have seen success within the genre. In "Stenka na stenku," Arkona includes references to the god of thunder in Pagan Slavic Mythology: "*Славит Перуна* [worships Perun]/*Сила народная*! [The power of the people!]." References to mythology are characteristic of the genre.

Turning away from Europe, folk metal has made its way to Latin America as *metal latino*. The instrumentation includes Latin percussion—the use of timbales and shakers, for example—and distinct rhythms of Latin American music, such as salsa.

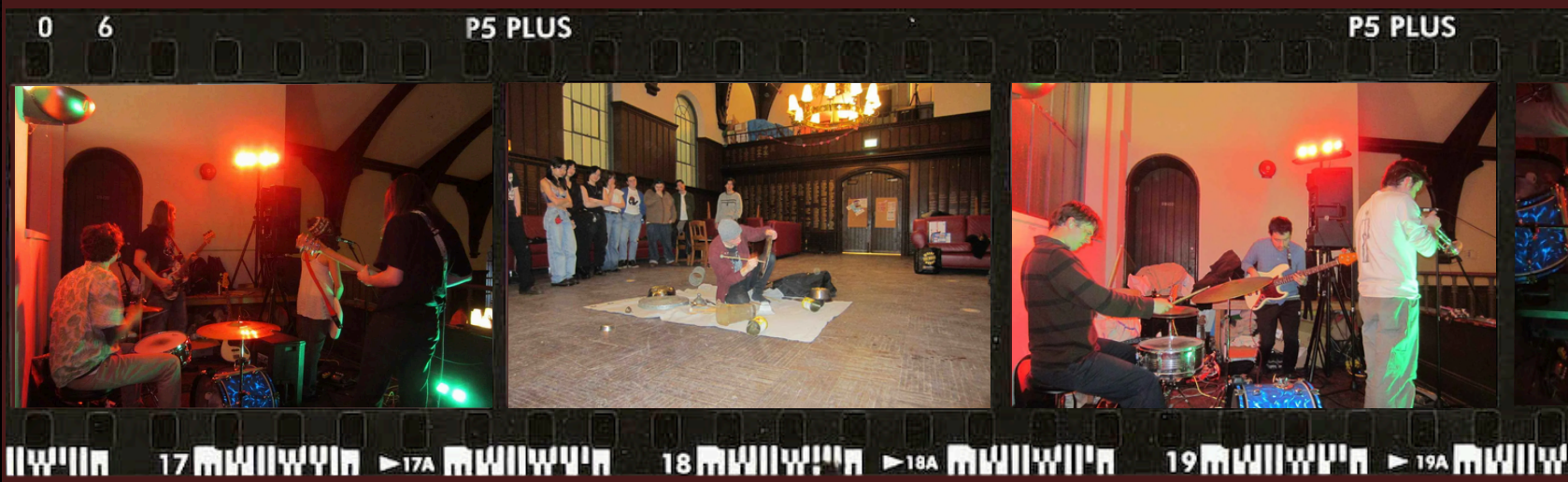
Diadema Tristis is a Doom metal folk group from Argentina, whose lyrics contain Andean allusions in a similar style to the references of bands with whom they share their genre.

Overall, while the genres of folk and metal seem inherently contradictory, they are rather complementary. Fantasy, affliction, and social commentary—topics that are commonly explored in metal music—become rooted in a specific place through the use of folk instrumentation. The emergence of fusion genres speaks to the interaction between music styles as they gain prominence around the world.

THIS YEAR IN DEMO

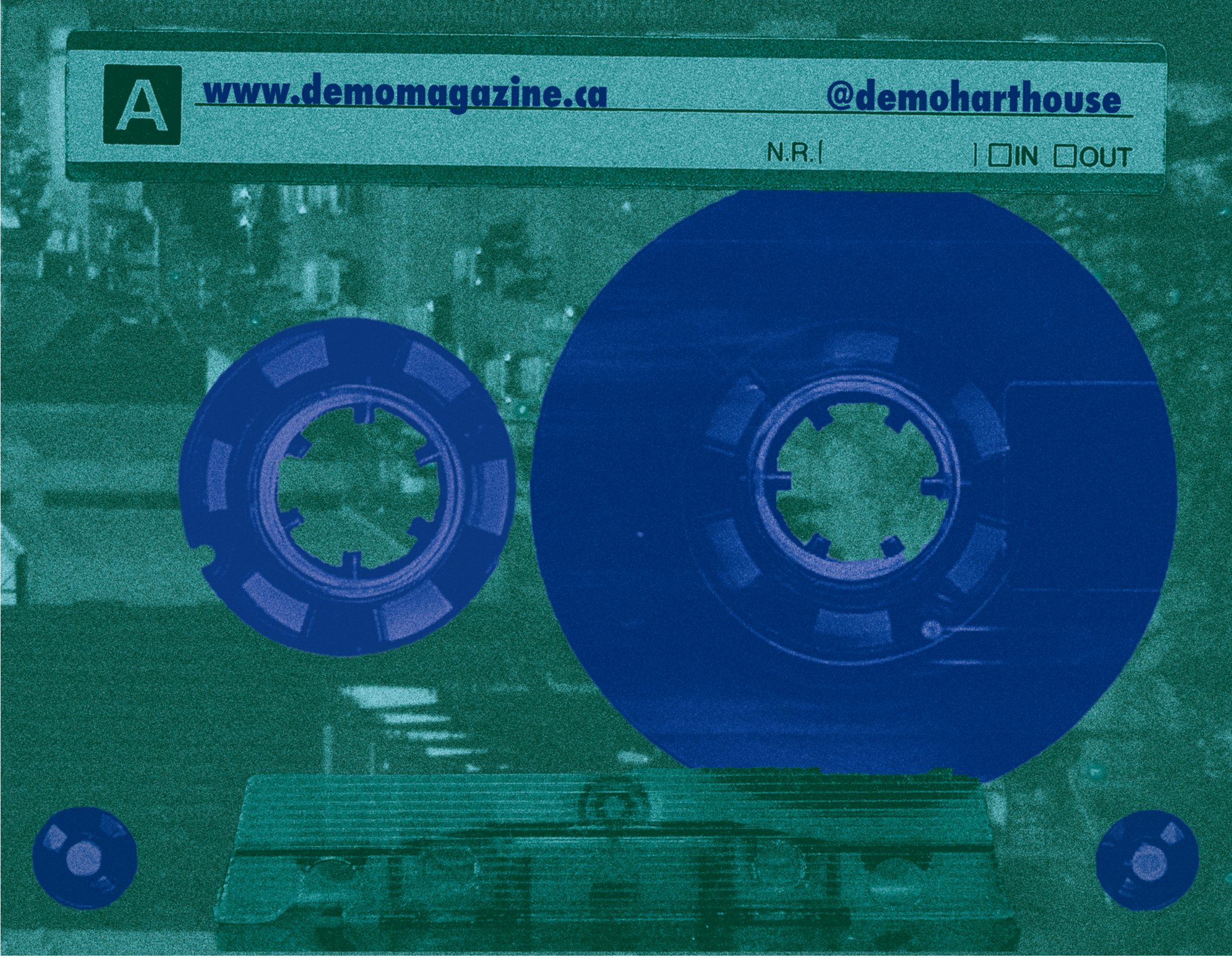
This year at Demo, we made it a mission to try to bring more live events showcasing local bands to our student community. We've been lucky enough to host some incredible artists in some truly unique venues. A huge thank you to everyone who came out to these shows, and stay tuned for more next year!

On November 23rd, we hosted our first zine launch in co-editor Jonah's backyard, with performances from singer-songwriters Amelia Maxwell and Jacob's Ladder, as well as a secret closing set by our co-editor themself.



On February 15th, we co-hosted a concert with The Gargoyle to celebrate the launch of their Noise issue in the Junior Common Room, with performances from the shoegazey alt-rock band White Rabbit, experimental percussionist %30%30, and jazz fusion trio Hiding Places.

From top to bottom, left to right: Amelia Maxwell, Jacob's Ladder, Jonah Page (as Buckley), White Rabbit, %30%30, and Hiding Places.


www.demomagazine.ca
@demoharthouse
N.R.
IN
OUT